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LETTER DATED 7 MARCH 2000 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 6 March 2000, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 6 March 2000 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) The Rt. Hon. Lord ROBERTSON
of Port Ellen, PC

Enclosure

Monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. During the reporting period (13 January-12 February 2000), there were approximately 24,000 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and from 15 non-NATO countries. Stabilization Force (SFOR) troops continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations in the theatre by means of ground and air patrols. Operations across the SFOR area included area security, monitoring the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, monitoring the entity armed forces, conducting weapons storage site inspections and providing support to the international organizations in the theatre.

2. SFOR troops continued to monitor compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998), which prohibits the transport of weapons into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by providing an intensified presence on the ground in order to enforce the embargo. No violations were reported.

3. SFOR also continued to monitor the movement of controlled petroleum products into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by establishing traffic control points. No violations were reported.

4. On 25 January, SFOR troops in the Multinational Division (MND) (South-East) detained a Bosnian Serb, Mitar Vasiljevic, who had been indicted for war crimes by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Vasiljevic was subsequently transferred to The Hague.

5. In accordance with the broadcasting ban imposed by the Independent Media Commission in November 1999 on the Croatian television station Erotel, the Office of the High Representative made an official request in early February for SFOR to support the Commission in reconfiguring the Erotel transmission sites. The reconfiguration began on 17 February.

6. The final phase of the Brcko (MND (North)) demilitarization process continued without incident. SFOR troops supported the process by providing security.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. During the reporting period, the situation remained stable, with the entities in substantial compliance with the military provisions of the Peace Agreement. The farmers' demonstration in MND (South-East), which began on 20 October 1999, continued throughout the period, with Bosniacs from Gorazde, numbering on average between 10 and 20, demonstrating for their right to work their land in Kopaci in the Republika Srpska. A joint initiative by the Office of the High Representative and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) resulted in the two sides meeting on 1 February and in contacts being established at the working level.

8. On 21 January, 500 people gathered in Mostar to protest the verdicts against five Bosnian Croats delivered by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague. Local police monitored the situation, and there was no violence.

9. During the reporting period there were two minor explosions. The first was in Pale on 31 January, when an explosive device detonated in front of the International Police Task Force (IPTF) station. There were no injuries. In the second, on 31 January, a hand grenade was thrown into a coffee bar in Kalesija in MND (North). Ten people were injured, one of them seriously.

10. Operation Harvest 99, aimed at reducing the private holdings of unregistered weapons, mines and other ordnance, has been extended.

11. On 9 February, SFOR supported the IPTF inspection of the civil police station and offices belonging to the Ministry of the Interior in Livno (MND (South-West)), during which a number of illegal weapons and electronic equipment were confiscated.

12. During the period, SFOR troops conducted 171 military weapons storage site inspections. They confiscated 12 mine fuses, 6 rounds of 20 mm ammunition, 2 porter charges, 3 boxes of M-62 fuses, 16 M51P15 fuses, 5 propellant charges, 1 barrel of AAG/FLAK 48 M1 and 125 rifles.

13. SFOR monitored 469 training and movement activities: 186 Bosniac; 20 Bosnian Croat; 211 Bosnian Serb; and 52 Federation. The training and movement ban on the Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade remains in force until further notice, as does the ban on elements of the Third Bosnian Serb Army Corps. In addition, on 26 January, the Stabilization Force Commander imposed a training and movement ban on the Croat component of the Federation Army as a result of violations of article 14 of the instructions to the parties (failure to disclose personnel and financial reports, and failure to reinstate Major General Dragicevic). The ban was conditionally lifted on 8 February.

14. The entity armies continued to undertake training and maintenance in preparation for the start of the summer 2000 mine-clearance campaign, which was expected to begin in mid-February.

15. During the period, six illegal checkpoints were reported in MND (North): three in Gradacac on 16 and 17 January, two in Odzak on 21 and 22 January and one in Pelagicevo on 22 January. The local police who set up the checkpoints had no IPTF permit, and the checkpoints were in the zone of separation without IPTF supervision. IPTF was informed in each case, and the checkpoints were dismantled.

Cooperation with international organizations

16. Within its capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in the theatre, including the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), IPTF, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Office of the High

Representative, OSCE and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

17. During the reporting period, SFOR responded to requests from UNHCR to support minority returnees and refugees, although only 20 such returns took place owing to the heavy snowfalls. In addition, SFOR monitored 844 house-cleaning and assessment visits.

18. On 27 January, the upper airspace of Bosnia and Herzegovina (29,000-39,000 feet) was reopened to commercial airlines.

19. SFOR continues to assist the Office of the High Representative in its efforts to establish joint institutions. At the 20 January meeting of the Standing Committee on Military Matters, efforts were made to persuade the Committee to agree to a further 15 per cent reduction in the defence force in 2000, with SFOR offering to assist the entity armed forces to achieve this reduction. The Presidency agreed to address this issue at the next meeting. Also on 20 January, the Federation Defence Minister reported on the work of the working group on the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in peacekeeping missions. A concept for such participation has now been agreed upon.

Outlook

20. Isolated incidents of violence can be expected to continue.

21. SFOR restructuring is proceeding, and is expected to be completed in the spring of 2000.